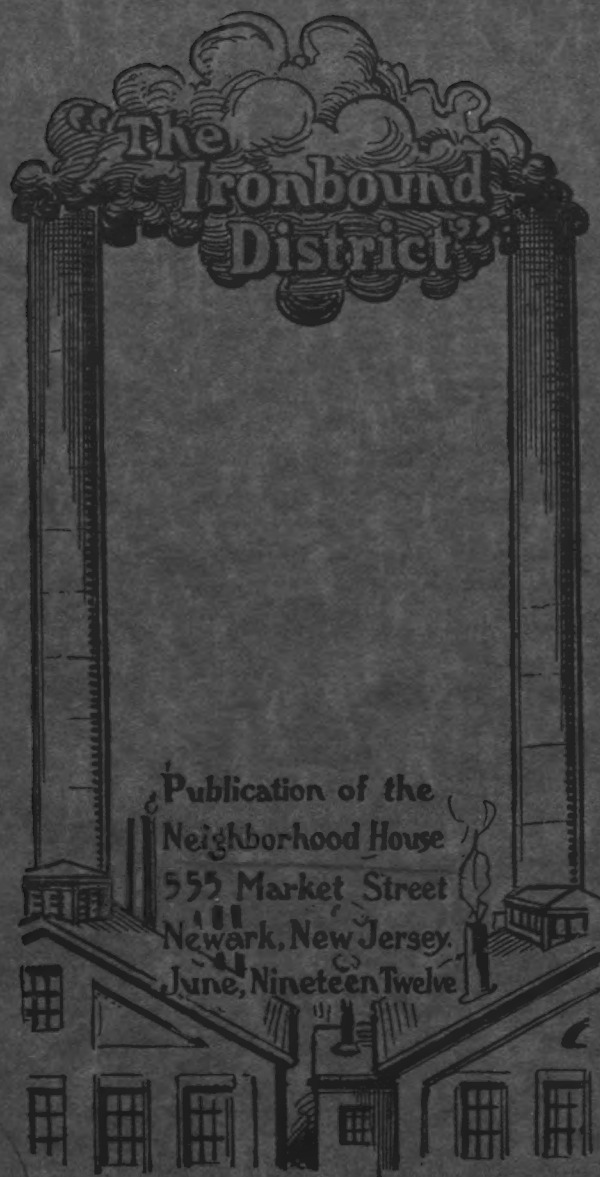




# *“The Ironbound District”*

Price

*A study of a district in  
Newark, N. J., made by  
Willard D. Price for  
the Neighborhood House*



The Neighborhood House

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## *"The Ironbound District"*

*Willard D. Price*

It is called "The Ironbound District" because it is surrounded by a belt of iron foundries. It might as appropriately have been named "Beer Island" for it is also girdled round with a circle of immense breweries. The ocean-like waves sweeping in from this open sea of breweries fairly submerge the little island at times.

It is a curious section of Newark, tucked in east of the Pennsylvania Station between the Passaic River and Ferry Street and the Bowery, with Market Street running through the heart of it. It is a district of industrial uproar, drifting smoke, heavy atmosphere, dangerous acid fumes and unforgettable odors. Its people are a hodge-podge of nationalities, speaking many old-world tongues, and making pathetic efforts to adjust themselves to their new and unwholesome American surroundings.

In the midst of this community of mingled peoples, ramshackle houses and tenements and busy factories, stands the Neighborhood House. The workers in this settlement, anxious

to become better acquainted with their district, made an investigation and study of the neighborhood. This survey, though far from exhaustive, disclosed a number of important facts, a few of the more interesting of which follow.

### *The People of "The Ironbound District"*

The term, "The Ironbound District," commonly used to indicate a certain general section without any precise boundaries, will be taken specifically in this study as applying to the district enclosed by Ferry Street, Chapel Street, Passaic Avenue and Market.



The Italians in the district are comparatively recent arrivals from southern Italy. More than half of their number cannot make themselves understood in the English language.

In the grand medley of nationalities that make up this community, the Irish and Poles are numerically the strongest elements. The Italians come next with a large colony. Germans occupy a smaller section. Still less numerous are the Jews, who, however, make up in intelligence and influence what

they lack in numbers. The majority of the store and saloon keepers on the Bowery are Jews, in spite of the fact that the Bowery is distinctly an Irish and Slavic community. Throughout the district are scattered a few Slovaks, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Lithuanians and a considerable number also of "plain Americans."

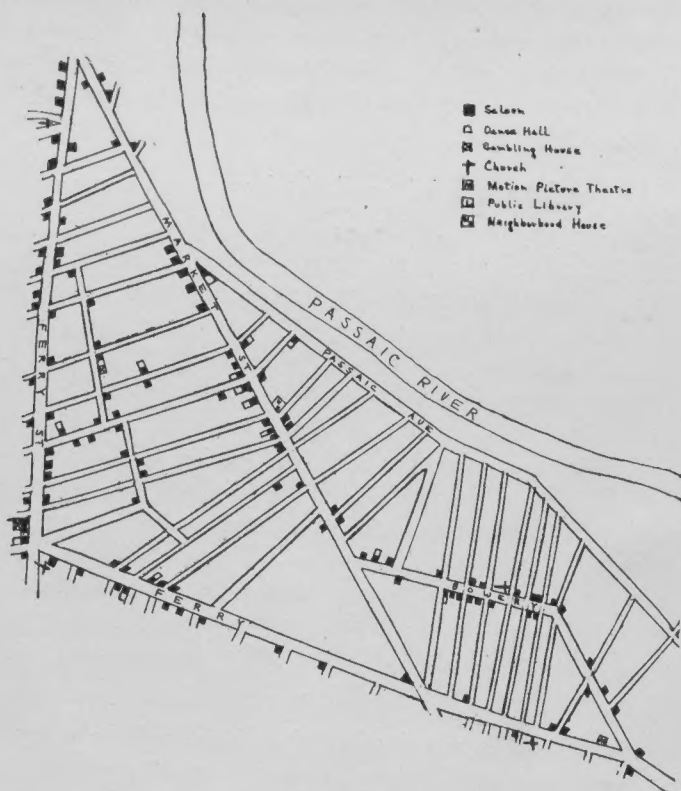
The Irish have occupied the district for a great many years. The Slavic and Italian people are comparatively recent arrivals—so recent in fact that more than half of their number cannot make themselves understood in the English language.

### *Social Facilities of "The Ironbound District"*

There is more pathos than comedy in speaking of the places of amusement and recreation in this district as "social facilities." By far the leading "social facility," both in numbers and in social influence, is the saloon. The saloon dance hall ranks next. The churches follow at a very respectful distance, and the rear of the procession is brought up by a few gambling houses, a couple of motion picture theatres, one public library and one settlement house.

The one public school within the district and the others just outside may be referred to in passing, although they are not used to any extent for social purposes. Also there is a small park which, however, is unutilized nine months in the year. The use of its really good athletic apparatus is only allowed during the three hottest months. Is this mistaken economy?

From the chart on the following page it will be seen that the total number of the saloons, dance halls and gambling houses—social facilities having on the whole a negative influence—is 140. The total number of churches, motion picture theatres, libraries and settlements—social facilities having for the most part a positive influence—is 8. In other words, the factory hand seeking recreation after the day's work is completed finds 17



# SOCIAL FACILITIES OF THE IRONBOUND DISTRICT

## NEGATIVE :

|         |     |             |    |                 |       |
|---------|-----|-------------|----|-----------------|-------|
| Saloons | 122 | Dance Halls | 15 | Gambling Houses | 3     |
|         |     |             |    |                 | Total |
|         |     |             |    |                 | 140   |

## POSITIVE :

|                         |   |                  |   |
|-------------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Churches                | 4 | Public Libraries | 1 |
| Motion Picture Theatres | 2 | Settlements      | 1 |
|                         |   | <hr/>            |   |
|                         |   | Total            | 8 |

doors inviting him to an evening of dissipation for every one door that is ready to swing open to an evening of wholesome enjoyment and profit. With the odds so tremendously against him, is it great wonder if he is mentally and morally inferior to his comfortable fellow-citizen up-town?

From saloon-keepers, proprietors of dance halls and gambling houses, pastors, the picture theatre cashier, the librarian at the branch library and the head-worker of the settlement, estimates were secured as to the number of people making use of these various social facilities weekly. These estimates were averaged and the results appear in the following table. It must be borne in mind that these figures are only approximate. They are, however, close enough to furnish a striking and essentially correct comparison.

*Approximate Weekly Attendance at the Various  
Social Facilities of the District*

|                        | No.                                 | Average<br>attendance<br>per week<br>for each | Aggregate<br>attendance<br>per week |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Saloons</b>         | 122                                 | 770                                           | 93,940                              |
| <b>Dance Halls</b>     | 15                                  | 450                                           | 6,750                               |
| <b>Gambling Houses</b> | 3                                   | 90                                            | 270                                 |
| <b>Churches</b>        | 4                                   | 1800                                          | 7,200                               |
| <b>Picture Theatre</b> | 1 { other<br>closed<br>at present } | 2000                                          | 2,000                               |
| <b>Public Library</b>  | 1                                   | 1000                                          | 1,000                               |
| <b>Settlement</b>      | 1                                   | 350                                           | 350                                 |

The saloon, open 7 days in the week and generally 18 hours a day, leads with 5 times as large attendance as all the other agencies combined. The churches come next and the

seven

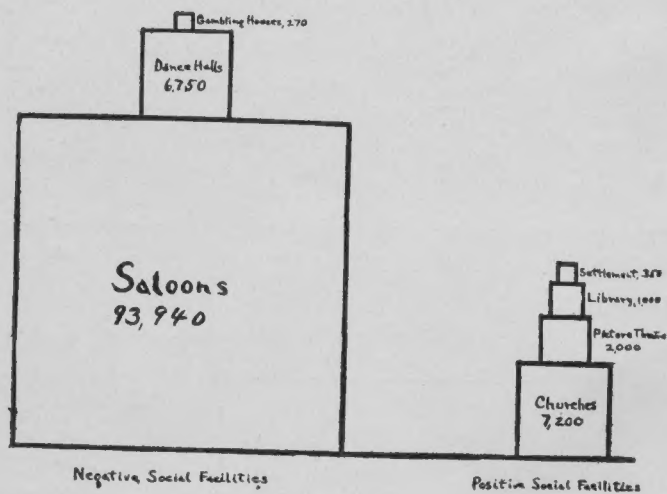
Free Public Library, Newark, N. J.



dance halls closely follow. The total attendance for the negative social facilities is 100,960; for the positive social facilities, 10,550. In other words, 9 per cent. of the attendance is claimed by the constructive agencies, while the remaining 91 per cent. is allowed to be absorbed by agencies for the most part destructive.

For every one person who comes into the church, picture theatre, library or settlement, ten are entering the saloon, dance hall or gambling house. For every one lesson that is being taught in moral education or clean recreation, there are being given ten lessons in vice, wastefulness and indigence.

### Approximate Weekly Attendance

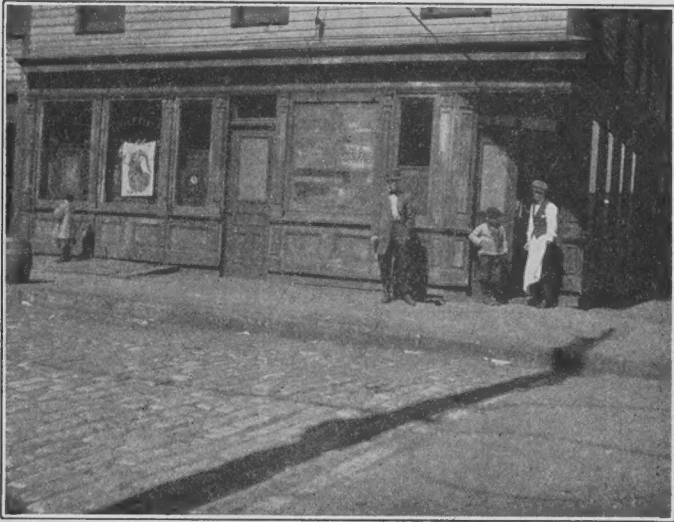


(Total attendance negative, 100,960; positive 10,550.)

The odds are ten to one in favor of the destructive agencies. Ten times as many visits are paid weekly to the negative as to the positive facilities. Small wonder when it is remembered that there are 140 negative facilities as against only 8 positive. (See chart, page six.)

## *The Saloons*

The figures secured with regard to the number of saloons, houses and tenements in "The Ironbound District" reveal the fact that there is one saloon to approximately every seven buildings used for dwelling purposes.



The most popular "social facility" in the district. On Sunday alone the attendance in the saloons for the day is over twice as great as the attendance in the churches.

Of the 122 saloons, 114 were found to be fitted up with tables and chairs for social purposes. That is 93 per cent. The saloons serve as social agencies of the communities in which they are situated. The men, after eating a hasty supper in a dirty, crowded home or boarding house, quite naturally leave such unattractive surroundings to spend the evening playing cards and drinking in a warm, well-lighted saloon. Friends find it a convenient meeting place, work and wages are discussed, political arguments are frequent, and recent immigrants discover it to be an admirable school in which to learn English rapidly and gain an acquaintance with things

American. Some of the saloons run savings banks. Many of them serve as club rooms for various social and political associations.

The saloons fill a real and vital social need—the need of fairly agreeable surroundings and congenial companionship. Until other social agencies equip themselves to fill that need as extensively, the popularity of the saloon is secure.

Every one of the 122 saloons in the district is open every day and every evening in the week, including Sunday. The saloons are well filled on Sundays from noon until midnight. The mayor of Newark favors a free Sunday. Moreover, the majority of the saloons are owned by breweries, and the breweries are well represented on the Excise Board. Consequently the interests of the saloons are never neglected.

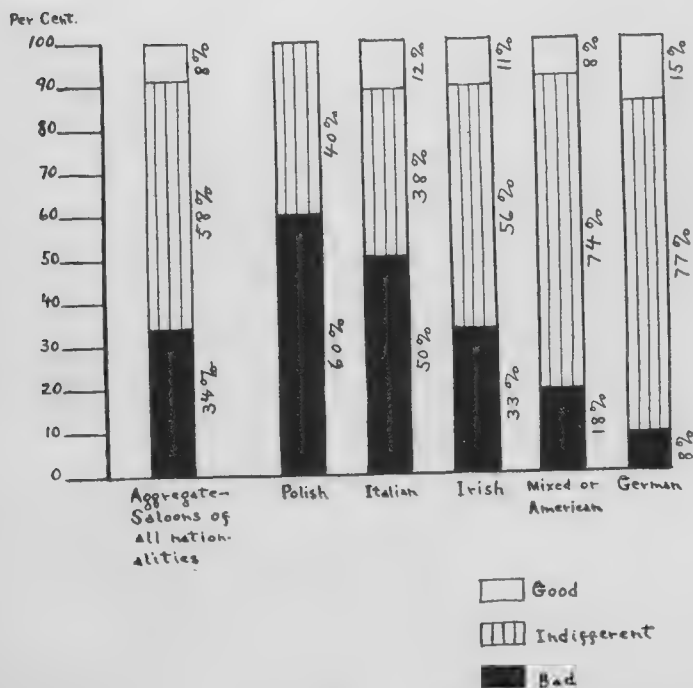
As a rule each nationality in the district has its own saloons. Polish saloons are often run by Irish saloon-keepers, but this does not seem to affect the predominant nationality frequenting them. The saloons may be divided according to the nationalities of their customers as follows:

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Mixed or American ..... | 31 per cent. |
| Irish .....             | 30 per cent. |
| Polish .....            | 20 per cent. |
| German .....            | 11 per cent. |
| Italian .....           | 6 per cent.  |
| Slovak .....            | 1 per cent.  |
| Hungarian .....         | 1 per cent.  |

In studying the cleanliness and general character of the saloons the results depended largely, of course, upon the personal opinion of the investigator. He may have labelled "Good" conditions which another critic would have condemned as "Indifferent" or even "Bad." But since all the saloons were inspected by the same investigator, and thus all measured by the same mental standard, it is possible at least to get a fairly accurate comparison between the saloons of different nationalities. Such a comparison is made in the following diagram.

## Saloons

as to Cleanliness and General Character

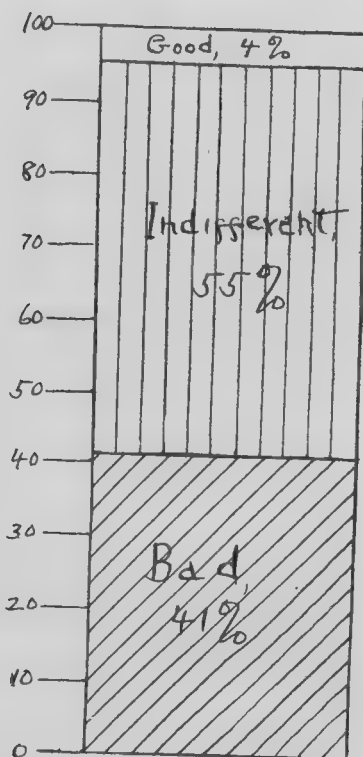


The saloons of the Poles and Italians (the most recent immigrants) are the poorest, the Irish and American saloons of somewhat higher grade, the German saloons by far the best.

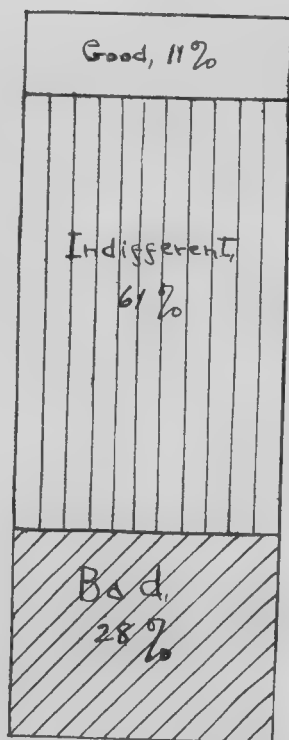
There is clearly a steady advance in quality from the saloons of the last comers, the Poles, to the saloons of the best established, the Americans. But even the American bar-rooms do not come up to the standard of those run by the Germans, who maintain their reputation for neatness by keeping far-and-away the best saloons—usually clean, orderly and attractive.

# Saloons

Cleanliness and General Character of those having pool tables, shuffle boards or bowling alleys.



Character of saloons having pool tables, shuffle boards or bowling alleys.



Character of saloons without games.

Fixed games and dirty, ill-kept saloons go hand in hand.  
The better saloons are without games.

Of the total number of saloons of all nationalities 34 per cent., or about one-third, are distinctly bad; that is they are dirty, slovenly, ill-kept, and in them heavy drinking, quarreling and gambling are common.

It was found that 41 per cent. of the saloons were equipped with pool tables, shuffle boards or bowling alleys. It might be supposed that places thus equipped would be among the better grade of saloons. The exact reverse is true. Of the saloons fitted up with these games, 41 per cent. are dirty, and of bad general character, while of the saloons without games only 28 per cent. are bad. Only 8 per cent. of the saloons with games are recorded as good, while 11 per cent., or more than twice as many, of the saloons without games are good.

The correspondence between bad saloons and games is shown too when we consider the saloons by nationalities. Seventy-five per cent. of the Italian saloons, which are next to the worst, are equipped with fixed games; 40 per cent. of the Polish; 44 per cent. of the Irish. Of the cosmopolitan and American saloons, which are fairly good, only 32 per cent. have games. And when we come to the best saloons, those patronized by Germans, we find only 23 per cent. equipped with games.

The reason is perhaps that as the worker advances economically and his home conditions improve, he feels less need of the saloon as a club and game room. On the other hand, the young man whose home surroundings are not pleasant must go to the poorest grade of saloons to find the recreation he desires, and should have. He must do that or go without. Being human, he will not go without.

### *The Dance Halls*

Every dance hall in "The Ironbound District" is directly connected with a saloon. The hall and saloon are in every case on the same floor. The doors into the saloon stand open during the evening so that for all practical purposes the two rooms are one. Occasionally a group of girls go in to the bar.

Usually, however, drinks are brought out to them in the dance hall.

Of the 15 dance halls investigated, 10 were predominantly Polish, 2 Italian, 1 Irish, 1 German and 1 cosmopolitan. The character of the halls varies about inversely with the number per nationality. That is, the Polish halls are the worst, the Italian a little better, and the German and cosmopolitan the best. The one Irish hall, however, is no better than the poorest of the Polish.

Every means is used to induce the young people who visit the dance hall to patronize the adjoining saloon. In all the free dance halls the dances are extremely short (four or five minutes) and the intermissions are extremely long (fifteen or twenty minutes). The long intermissions, the object of which is to increase the sale of drinks, are a striking success from the proprietor's point of view.



A partial substitute for the saloon hall. A much larger and well-equipped dance hall is one of the immediate needs of the Neighborhood House.

Also in some of the halls the windows and ventilators are kept tightly closed and, if opened, are promptly closed again, for the reason, as one bar-tender confidentially admitted, that the "hotter and stuffier" it became in the hall the more nickels got into the cash register in the saloon.

As the hour grows later, the room closer, and the dancers become more wearied, the business of the saloon steadily increases in volume. Young girls, little more than children, who had not the slightest intention of drinking when they left home, become so enervated by the stagnant air and the monotony of the long intermissions that they are easily persuaded a glass or two will do them good.

Some idea of the amount of liquor sold may be gained from the fact that no direct charge whatever is made to the dancers, all the expenses of heating, lighting, music, special officer, and the profit besides, being covered by the receipts at the bar.

The evil of close connection with the saloon is abetted by another evil no less serious—that of informal introductions. It is unnecessary first to be introduced to a girl before asking her to dance or drink. Many are the stories in "The Ironbound District" of "real nice girls" who have been accosted and won over by disreputable young men in the dance halls and led into ruinous companionships. And there are plenty of "real nice girls" who attend the saloon dance hall. Not because it is their ideal of a place of recreation, but because it is a question of choosing between it and nothing. The selection is certainly not varied, and there is little doubt as to which alternative will be chosen, even by the most conscientious girls. There is no check whatever upon freedom of acquaintance between these girls and the worst elements that frequent the halls.

In these elements are included the cadet and the procurer who have frequently been seen plying their trade in the halls of the district. The social evil is not so conspicuous in the neighborhood as in many similar immigrant communities, but it is by no means absent. As a rule the associations forced upon the girls are rather the acquaintanceship of rowdies, toughs and cheap "sports" of doubtful character. Considerable immor-



ality is known to result from these associations, but it is not commercialized vice. Throughout the district there is much promiscuity and immorality, especially in households where a number of men lodgers are crowded in with a family. But the social evil, in its organized and commercialized form, has been fought so vigorously by the Church and other agencies that the district is now considered not the most promising field for this special form of exploitation. Lessened, but not eliminated, this evil still claims a place among the perils of the community.

There is, on ordinary occasions, little distinctly immoral dancing in the halls, and practically no really good dancing. Most of the dancing is a feeble parody of some sort upon the standard two-step or waltz. Looking over the hall one sees endless variation in movement, no two couples dancing alike. When by rare chance two people who can dance properly enter the hall and move with grace and rhythm across the floor, a sensation is created, and all the other dancers are apt to stop and gaze open-mouthed at the couple who possess the much-coveted ability to dance correctly.

The chief difficulty ordinarily seems to be *lack of knowledge* of how to use the American dances, not a deliberate desire to dance improperly. Violent exceptions to this rule occur at balls and semi-private dances when propriety is thrown to the winds and the revellers seem hysterically bent on outvieing each other in the most revolting indecencies.

Even at the free dances, "four-stepping," clumsy "spieling" and close, sensual dancing are common. The "grizzly bear" makes its appearance at times. The "lover's two-step," "bunny hug," "turkey-trot" and other dances of the same character are, as yet, rarely seen. The simple-minded, ignorant folk of "The Ironbound District" have not yet been educated to these alluring American distortions of the art of dancing. But they will not long remain benighted. Young people who have returned from visits to New York halls are now enthusiastically engaged in introducing these dances in the community.

Following is a summary of the foregoing points, together with a few other facts of interest which must be passed over without special comment:

|                                                                          | No. of<br>halls. | Per cent. of<br>total no.<br>halls. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Dance Halls—Connected with saloons                                       | 15               | 100                                 |
| Used for free dances..                                                   | 11               | 73                                  |
| Used for balls and wed-<br>dings only . . . . .                          | 4                | 27                                  |
| With a bar or tables<br>in the hall. . . . .                             | 4                | 27                                  |
| With a stage in the hall                                                 | 4                | 27                                  |
| Having no special officer                                                | 8                | 53                                  |
| In which introductions<br>are unnecessary . . . .                        | 15               | 100                                 |
| In which "spieling" and<br>illegitimate dancing<br>are allowed . . . . . | 15               | 100                                 |
| In which the American<br>two-step or waltz is<br>properly danced . . . . | 0                | 0                                   |

Many young men and young women of the district express their dislike for the evils of the saloon dance hall—the saloon connection, the lack of the safeguard of formal introductions, and the bad dancing. As one very attractive and intelligent Polish girl said, "People seem to think we come to these places because we can't appreciate anything better. It never occurs to them that we have nothing better to appreciate. We can't be choosers, because there's only one thing to choose—and that's the saloon hall."

So the saloon dance hall reigns supreme among the young people as a place of recreation. It reigns supreme because it reigns alone. Only the competition of wholesome means of recreation, and the improvement of existing laws together with more strict civic and social control over the dance halls will break the back of their absolutism, and either put them out of business, or forcibly elevate their tone.

## *The Gambling Houses*

Besides occasional gambling in many of the poorer saloons, gambling is regularly carried on at three "joints" in the district. One of these is a room on the top floor above the motion picture theatre near the corner of Polk and Ferry. The proprietor of this place is a district leader and a good friend of the Sheriff's. Consequently he is well taken care of. Many a week's wages are lost here. On the second floor of 92 Ferry Street behind the rooms of the Cygnet Club is another room used for gambling. This place is frequented principally by Italians who often stake and lose—or win—comparatively large sums of money. The third gambling place is in the basement under a saloon on Downing Street. Here most of the patrons are boys, the money stakes are small, and the place serves more as a beginner's school in gambling than as a regular gambling house. Its graduates step easily into the more advanced risks offered by the other houses.

## *The Churches*

The saloons, dance halls and gambling houses, 140 in number, are social facilities with a negative influence. Opposed to these are 8 social facilities with a positive influence. Four of the 8 are churches.

Two of these churches are Catholic, one Reformed and one German Evangelical. The total Sunday attendance of the two Catholic churches is 2800 and 1100 respectively, of the Reformed, 475, and of the German church, 1290—making a total of 5665 people reached by the four churches on a Sunday. According to the averaged estimates of saloon-keepers, roughly 13,000 people enter the 122 saloons on a Sunday. Thus it is seen that even on the first day of the week, which is by far the day of greatest strength for the Church, this most powerful positive social facility in the community reaches not half the number of people reached by the saloon on the same day.

This deficiency cannot be charged entirely to the churches. They are doing, in some cases, excellent, aggressive work. But it is like the struggle of a pigmy against a giant—a David, we may hope, against a Goliath. Only in this case Goliath is not lumberingly stupid; he is, rather, far more astute, agile and cunning than his small opponent. And he relies upon his cunning, as much as upon his size, to defeat all comers.



No excuse for despair so long as faces like these shine out of the district's squalid streets.

Averaging the reports from the churches it appears that they are open about 5 evenings or afternoons during the 6 week days. This is a vastly better showing than could be made by many up-town churches. But the 10 or 15 hours represented by these 5 sessions look pitifully small when compared with the 110 hours which the saloons are open during the same period of time.

Work for boys is very meagre in all four churches. The German church, the most progressive in other ways, has no work as yet for boys. The Italian Catholic church had a Junior Holy Name Society which died for lack of proper lead-

ership. The Irish Catholic church maintains a Junior Holy Name Society of 250 members, which meets, however, only once a month. The Reformed church has a small club of 30 members who have the use of a small pool room nightly. Also this church is contemplating the organization of Boy Scout work. All four churches combined during the working week certainly do not reach more than 300, and probably not more than 100 boys.



All happy but one! A gang of Italian boys pummeling the leader of a hostile Irish gang.

There are more activities for girls—probably because girls take part in the ordinary type of church societies more readily than do boys. Two Christian Endeavor Societies, a Junior Christian Endeavor Society and two sewing circles comprise the total, excluding Sunday services, of the week's work for girls. Men and women are considerably better cared for by the church organizations than are the girls and boys.

So far as could be learned from the pastors, none of the churches are doing any social work in the community other

than that represented by their own church meetings. One church, to be sure, has a "Poor Circle" which holds a weekly prayer meeting at which the pastor says earnest supplications are offered up on behalf of the worthy poor. The work of the Circle is limited to the offering of these supplications.

The inspirational work of the Church must not be forgotten or minimized in the least. It is valuable and essential. But there is a great opportunity, in "The Ironbound District," of backing up the inspiring word on Sunday with a helping hand during the week. The churches of the district seem aware of that opportunity, but unable, as yet, fully to rise to it.

### *The Motion Picture Theatres*

One of them is closed at present, and perhaps therefore should not have been so generously counted in among our 8 positive social facilities. The other theatre is open nightly, except Sunday, its attendance being about 1000 on Saturday and 2000 for the week. It is fairly clean and well ventilated, and the films used are of standard quality. Pictures of an educational nature are often shown. The motion picture show, while not ideal, is one of the most wholesome forms of entertainment offered to the young people of the community. We feel that every encouragement should be afforded the opening of new picture theatres in the district. An increase in their number will mean a decrease in the monopoly now enjoyed by the dance halls and saloons as dispensers of pleasure.

### *The Public Library*

The Ferry Street Public Library Branch is one of the most splendid of the social facilities of "The Ironbound District." According to the librarian, fully 1000 people visit this library weekly, either to draw books or use the reading room. 59,215 books were lent last year. The library shows its appreciation of the needs of its district by issuing for general reference type-written lists of books on such practical subjects as, "Dress-making and Millinery," "Nursing," "Electro-plating," "Business Books for Girls," "Food and Dietetics," etc.

## *The Settlement*

The one settlement is the Neighborhood House. It is in somewhat the same position as the churches—aware of its great opportunity, but consciously unequal to the tremendous situation that confronts it.

Every recreational and educational facility offered by the House is used to the full. Its dressmaking classes, cooking classes, carpentry club, athletic club, classes in English for foreigners, Penny Provident Fund, library, social clubs, entertainments, dances, lectures and neighborhood visiting are all wonderfully appreciated and undoubtedly do an immense amount of good.



Additional pool tables, more club rooms, a gymnasium, a bowling alley and like facilities for young men and boys are urgently required by the Neighborhood House.

But the very eagerness with which all these things are utilized only brings the workers to a sharper realization of the *unsatisfied* needs of the community. The work of the Neighborhood House could be multiplied tenfold and still not exhaust the demands of the community for the sort of wholesome enjoyment and education it affords. A gymnasium is required,

a dance hall, more club rooms, additional pool tables, a bowling alley, facilities for motion pictures, etc. The immediate need of more equipment, a larger building and a greater staff is felt to meet better the opportunity offered now in "The Iron-bound District."

### *Housing Conditions*

The most common type of dwelling in the district is the old, dilapidated, single house, designed originally for one family. Now four or five families and a varied assortment of lodgers are crowded into the space intended for a single family group. The inevitable results are constant discomfort, the spread of tuberculosis, the breaking down of family life, lack of privacy, and widespread immorality.

There are about half as many frame tenements as old houses and about half as many brick tenements as frame. Strictly speaking, of course, many of the old houses are legally tenements, since a tenement is defined by the law as any building in which three or more families are living and do their cooking on the premises. In both the old houses and tenements, dark interior rooms are frequently found.

All the three-story tenements—and the majority of the tenements are this height—either have no fire escape whatever or are equipped with an outside wooden staircase which, in case of fire, would burn more readily than any other part of the building. This status is permitted by the law, which only requires tenements of four stories or more to be provided with fire escapes. It must be said that this law, insufficient though it is, is fairly well enforced. There is, however, on the Bowery, an ancient four-story tenement, admirable kindling for a blaze, which has evaded the law and is without any sort of fire protection.

The law requiring the lighting at night of the public halls of tenements is almost universally disregarded. The regulations with respect to overcrowding are also ineffective. There are several rear tenements in the district. In many of the old houses there is no running water whatever in the building, and



the inmates must go to a tap nearby in the yard for their water supply. This order of things is sanctioned by the Sanitary Code.



Small single houses, meant for one family, are now being crowded with four or five families and a varied assortment of lodgers.

The health law is notably defective in the vast amount of discretion it gives to the Board of Health. Matters which should have been settled conclusively by the law are left to the Board to decide. For instance, the Sanitary Code in Section 784 provides that "Whenever the Board of Health or Health Officer thereof shall so direct, all houses and other buildings abutting on streets in which a sewer is laid or shall be laid, shall be connected with said sewer by the owner, agent or lessee of said premises." Such a question should not be left to the decision of the Board of Health. There should be no choice in the matter. The connection with a street sewer, where such a sewer exists, should be distinctly required by law and made as a matter of course. There are in the Code a multitude of similar grants to the Board of unnecessary discretionary powers. The opportunities afforded by such powers

for political and commercial favoritism are obvious, and it is also obvious to anyone living in "The Ironbound District" that such opportunities are not always lost.

### *Industries*

Within a quarter of a mile of The Neighborhood House are 18 great factories. They manufacture everything from cigars to hoisting engines. Wagons, gas, dog cakes, brushes, metal goods, iron foundings, hatters' fur, sashes, celluloid, glass, beer, bread, refined metals and patent leather are among the products of the more important industries in this small district.

Newark is very proud of her many industries, and when one of them is a bit crude and brutal in its disregard of the interests of its employees, the city, like an over-fond mother, tries to close her eyes to the offense. Better that a few employees should be inhumanly treated than that an industry should leave town! So she zealously refrains from persecuting her foster children.

On several occasions when the destruction of workmen by an industry has been a little too gross and conspicuous, the always humane public has demanded an investigation of that industry. We know of one case in which the investigation was made, but was carried through in a wholly perfunctory manner so that the evils it was intended to detect and correct are just as flagrant to-day as ever before. This was the case of a very wealthy industry within "The Ironbound District."

It has been impossible within the limits of this survey to make a thorough investigation of the industries of the district. But such an investigation is sorely, sorely needed. Where there is much smoke there is some fire, and where a whole neighborhood is seething with resentment of industrial cruelty and oppression, there is probably some cause for such bitterness. A painstaking investigation, having special reference to wages, conditions of work, industrial diseases and industrial accidents, is urgently required.

Many of the industries of the district are of a sort especially adapted to cause different forms of occupational disease unless proper preventive measures are taken. In the factory above referred to, the inhalation of the dust which flew before the investigation was made, and which has been flying just as thickly ever since, predisposes to diseases of the respiratory passages, frequently resulting in tuberculosis. The chronic inflammatory condition of the mucous membranes produced by this dust, strongly favors infection with the tubercle bacillus. The danger might easily be averted by the employment of respirators and forced ventilation to carry the dust away from the operator.

It is said that at the same time with the large firm above mentioned, a small firm in the same industry was also investigated. Since public sentiment demanded that something be done, this small firm, employing only a few men, was forced to put in "blowers." Its wealthy neighbor, exposing many hundreds of men to identically the same dangers, was not molested.

Another firm within the district constitutes a very deserving object for a minute investigation. More complaints are heard against this firm than any other in the community. So many times a week is the ambulance called to the door of this plant that it is a common saying, when the ambulance bell is heard clanging down the street, "One more on —'s junk heap!" naming the company!

We have spoken only of the problem of occupational disease. We have not the space here even to indicate the great need for investigation of those other crucial industrial problems of the district—industrial accidents, conditions of work, and wages. These questions cry aloud for attention and solution. The ignorant immigrants of the community can do little or nothing in the fight for decent conditions. Only through the action of public spirited citizens outside the district can relief come.

## *The Tonic of a Big Opportunity*

It was an enthusiastic reformer who said, "It makes a man feel good all over to think of how many things there are wrong that have got to be set right!" While it does not cheer us to think of the evils engrafted upon "The Ironbound District"—its pitiful excuses for "social facilities," its old-world ignorance and illiteracy, its unfortunate housing conditions and its industrial tyranny—still there is something inspiring in the largeness and significance of the opportunity it presents. The Neighborhood House is grasping that opportunity. The efficiency of its work will be measured exactly by the number of people who help it—the amount of co-operation it can secure. A frank bid for interest and support is hereby made.

But, after all, the Neighborhood House can only do its little. Many other agencies should be set to work in the community to "compete," if you will, with the settlement. Such "competition" will be heartily welcomed by the Neighborhood House, and the more keen such big-hearted rivalry becomes, the greater will be the advantage to "The Ironbound District."



Seven good arguments for more adequate social service in  
"The Ironbound District."